



**HIGH COMMISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
PRETORIA**

**Muslim places of worship in the government controlled areas
of the Republic of Cyprus**

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus has consistently undertaken systematic efforts for the protection of all places of worship, as well as other monuments and cultural sites on the island, including the Muslim monuments which constitute an inseparable part of the island's cultural heritage.

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus, in respect of the European of the values of multiculturalism and religious tolerance as well as the fundamental human right of the freedom of religion, has shown the proper respect towards the Muslim religion and Muslim places of worship and facilitates in every possible way the ritual services of Turkish Cypriots and other Muslims who reside in Cyprus.

Since 1974, the forcible division and the Turkish military occupation of the 36.2 percent of the territory of Cyprus, has rendered the Government unable to provide the necessary protection for the Muslim places of worship in the Turkish occupied areas.

Moreover, 101 Muslim places of worship, including 19 listed Ancient Monuments, in the Government controlled areas were left unattended as a consequence of the Turkish policy of ethnically segregating the two communities of the island. Those places of worship were placed under the custodianship of the Turkish Cypriot Management Service of the Ministry of Interior which has undertaken remarkable restoration and maintenance works.

Following a decision of the Council of Ministers, the Government launched general restoration works for 83 Muslim places of worship in the Government controlled areas in the period 1989-1990. The works had a total cost of 206,120 €.

Since then, the Government of the Republic of Cyprus has spent a significant sum for the cleaning and restoration of mosques, cemeteries and other Muslim monuments. The following table is indicative of the consistent interest of the successive Governments of the Republic for the preservation of the Muslim places of worship in the years 2000-2011.

Expenses provided by the Turkish Cypriot Properties Management Service the Republic of Cyprus for the restoration and maintenance of Muslim places of worship in the Government controlled areas since 2000

Year	Annual Expenses
2000	103,020 €
2001	75,011 €
2002	117,681€
2003	107,307 €
2004	584,795 €
2005	482,885 €
2006	405,021 €
2007	410,096 €
2008	285,326 €
2009	582,827 €
2010	440,775 €
2011	504.331 €
Total	3,696.05 €

Furthermore, the State budget for 2012 includes the sum of €587.500 for restoration and maintenance works of the Muslim places of worship in the Government controlled areas.

Muslim Places of Worship which are listed Ancient Monuments as per the Antiquities Law:

The Department of Antiquities of the Ministry of Communications and Works of the Republic of Cyprus as the competent authority for the antiquities and monuments in all the territory of the Republic of Cyprus is responsible for the declaration of Muslim monuments and sites as Ancient Monuments. The listed monuments include: (a) eighteen mosques and one mausoleum in the Government controlled areas, (b) Ottoman baths, traditional Turkish coffee shops and shops, schools, water mills, public fountains etc.

These 19 Muslim religious monuments are today in an excellent condition due to the elaborate scientific restoration program which the Department of Antiquities has launched in 1995.

The current situation of the 19 Ancient Monuments is as follows:

Nicosia District:

1. **Nicosia, Bairaktar mosque:** restored and used for the religious services by the Turkish Cypriot community.
2. **Nicosia, Taht-el-Kaleh mosque:** restored.

3. **Nicosia, Omerie mosque:** the mosque is used for the religious needs of the Muslims who reside in Nicosia. The restoration works have not proceeded because the faithful refuse to transfer to a different mosque during the restoration period.
4. **Nicosia, Arablar Mosque/ Church of Stavros tou Missiricou:** restored.
5. **Peristerona, Mosque:** declared as Ancient Monument in 2012.

Larnaca District:

1. **Larnaca, Zouhourri Mosque:** restored.
2. **Larnaca, Tousla Mosque:** restored.
3. **Larnaca, Kebir Mosque:** the mosque is used by Muslim people who reside in Larnaca. It is currently being restored and restoration works are expected to be completed in 2014.
4. **Klavdia, Mosque (byzantine church of 5aint Catherine):** restored.
5. **Dromolaxia, Hala Sultan Tekke:** one of the most important sites for the Islamic world in general. It was restored and completely renovated through a project funded by United Nations Office for Project Services and the Department of Antiquities. Restoration works are being carried out on a yearly basis. The Monument is used for religious rituals on a regular basis.

Limassol District:

1. **Limassol, Kebir Mosque:** restored. Muslim people who reside in Limassol practice their religion there. Additional restoration works are planned for 2013.
2. **Limassol, Ali-Dede mausoleum:** restored.
3. **Limassol, Arnaout Mosque:** declared as Ancient Monument in 2012.
4. **Episkopi, Mosque (byzantine church of 5aint George):** restored.

Paphos District:

1. **Paphos, Mosque at "Mouttallos" (byzantine church of Saint Sophia):** restored. Additional restoration works in the surrounding area of the Monument are being conducted in 2012.
 2. **Timi, Mosque (byzantine church of Saint Sophia):** restored.
 3. **Chrysochou, Mosque (byzantine church of Saint Nicholas):** restored.
 4. **Polis Chrysochous, Mosque (church of Saint Andronicos):** restored.
 5. **Pelathousa, Mosque (church of Saint Catherine):** restored.
- In the years 1975-1999 the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus spent €294,620 for the restoration, conservation of the Muslim places of worship which are listed Ancient Monuments as per the Antiquities Law.
 - The following table shows the annual expenses for the years 2000-2011:

Expenses provided by the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus for the restoration and maintenance of Muslim places of worship which are listed Ancient Monuments in the government controlled areas

Year	Annual Expenses
2000	72,120 €
2001	23,180 €
2002	40,350 €
2003	46,355€
2004	36,910 €
2005	145,940 €
2006	130,280 €
2007	91,087 €
2008	108,599 €
2009	313,777 €
2010	357,607 €
2011	180,699 €
Total	1,546,904 €

The planned restoration works of Muslim places of worship in the Government controlled areas are expected to cost €275,000 for 2012 and €490,000 for 2013.

Practice of Muslim religious rituals:

- As a consequence of the Turkish occupation of Cyprus and the enforced segregation of its people, the Muslim places of worship in the Government controlled areas were left unattended by the Turkish Cypriot faithful for many years. In 2003, the partial lifting of the restriction of the freedom of movement which was imposed by the occupation regime since 1974, has allowed many Turkish Cypriots to practice their faith in the Muslim places of worship in the Government controlled areas. Furthermore, the monuments are used by the Muslim migrants in Cyprus.
- There are currently eight mosques in the Government controlled areas that function on a regular basis (five of which are listed Ancient Monuments): two mosques in the Nicosia walled city, a mosque in Dhali located in the Nicosia District, Hala Sultan Tekke in Dromolaxia, the Kebir Mosque in Larnaca, two mosques in Limassol and a mosque in Paphos.

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